

REMARKS

Claims 3, 6 and 9-10 are currently pending in the application. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Interview Summary

Applicants wish to thank Examiners Cadugan and Gates for their courtesy and cooperation during the personal interview conducted on May 3, 2006. In the interview, the Examiners agreed that the rejections set forth in the Office Action would be withdrawn, and that a further search would be conducted. Applicants submit that this response makes the substance of the interview of record, and therefore satisfies the requirements of MPEP §713.04.

35 U.S.C. §102/103 Rejection

Claims 3 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or alternatively under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) by applicants' admitted prior art (AAPA) in view of *In re Dailey*. Claims 6 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,497,540 issued to Shikata et al. ("Shikata"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, the Examiner agreed to withdraw these rejections in the interview conducted on May 3, 2006. As of May 9, 2006, the USPTO Public PAIR system lists the status of the instant application as "Allowed – Notice of Allowance Not Yet Mailed". Because Applicants have not yet received the Notice of Allowance,

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this Response Under 37 CFR §1.111 is being timely filed in response to the outstanding Office Action of February 9, 2006.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 3, 6, 9, and 10 be withdrawn

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required.

Respectfully submitted,
Toru SHIMOSATO, et al.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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